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Patron: Wright, Jonathan

Journal Title: Let us live to make men
free ; the Negro in American democracy

Volume: Issue:

Month/Year: Pages:

Article Author:

Article Title:

OCLC Number: 50558270

ILL Number: 75401971



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Introduction

In the spring of 1960, the struggle for Civil Rights entered upon a new stage. Throughout the South, thousands of young Negroes participated in sit-ins and began to develop a militant mass movement of their own. In the North, the partisans of Negro freedom were electrified by this magnificent display of courage and conviction. Picket lines and boycotts sprang up in city after city, and the Civil Rights organizations began a process of growth and intensified activity.

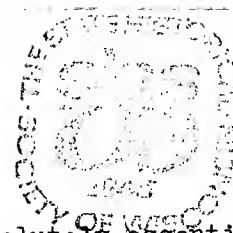
These events occurred after the main body of this pamphlet was written. And yet, there is no need for a basic revision in the light of these new events. As a socialist analysis, this essay places the Civil Rights struggle in its historical context and makes its practical proposals from the vantage point of describing the fundamental forces at work, the necessary direction of progress. The new stage of militancy thus confirms the main points of this approach - indeed, it makes the social and historical understanding of Jim Crow all the more relevant.

And yet, a certain redefinition is necessary, if only to indicate that the practical political proposals made at the end of this essay are now much more immediate and possible. Particularly, it is necessary to understand the implications of the new stage of the struggle for Civil Rights as it affects the idea of mass participation in the struggle for freedom, as it relates to the potential for political realignment and as it becomes a factor pointing to the creation of a new, democratic youth movement in the United States.

First of all, the events in the spring of 1960 are a clear indication that the approach of mass participation and direct action described in this pamphlet correspond to the deepest aspirations of the Negroes and their white allies in the United States. The debate has now been settled by the people themselves: there must be an unceasing battle in the courts; but this must be vitalized and made meaningful by the direct involvement of the millions who strive for Civil Rights.

Much has been written about the "New Negro." Now this is no longer a matter of analysis; it is a visible fact. The old Southern stereotype of the apathetic and passive Negro accepting segregation without real protest has been utterly destroyed. In its place, there is now the image of the New Negro: courageous, militant, demanding an immediate end to the system of human degradation that is Jim Crow. Indeed, if the sit-in movement failed in all of its practical demands (and that is not the case), it would still be of momentous significance, as a demonstration of the existence of the New Negroes. The racists in the South will never be the same again, for they have been deprived of their myth of the Negro acceptance of segregation; the Negroes, South and North, will never be the same again for they have forged a new identity in the very midst of struggle.

Secondly, this development points to the enormous potential of a Civil Rights movement based upon mass participation and direct action. These actions in the South have affected every sphere of American society: they have had a political impact, they have awakened a new sense of struggle in the North, they have helped to bring a purposiveness to youth in America. The pickets and boycotts sponsored by CORE, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Freedom in the South, and other organizations are but the first step in a process which is moving toward the creation of an irresistible movement for human freedom in the United States.



It must be emphasized again that court action is absolutely essential to this new stage. The magnificent accomplishments of the NAACP laid the groundwork for the Southern sit-ins, and the path of litigation must be pursued until it eradicates the last vestige of legal support for Jim Crow. But the legal and political battle, we now know, is made meaningful by the support of hundreds of thousands of people who demonstrate their strength, idealism and purpose.

Moreover, the new stage makes it even more obvious that the fight for Civil Rights must broaden through helping in the creation of a political alternative in the United States.

Even while the sit-ins were taking place, Congress was engaged in watering down the legislative proposals for Civil Rights. The reason for this disgraceful performance (Thurgood Marshall, of the NAACP, described the final bill as "hardly worth the paper it is written on") is analyzed at length in this pamphlet and there is no need to repeat this material in an introduction. What is new, however, is that the new stage has made these proposals for political realignment all the more relevant and immediate.

How long can the liberal proponents of integration maintain their alliance with the filibustering Dixiecrats? How long can the prestige and power of an Eastland continue to rest upon the seniority votes of those who are elected as the representatives of Civil Rights? These questions are now political. Millions of people are going to act differently depending on how they are answered.

This pamphlet contains a very specific proposal: that the struggle for Civil Rights in Congress can only be won through political realignment, through the creation of a new party based upon the Negroes, the labor movement, the liberals and the more radical section of the farm population. Such a party, as this essay shows, is not a "third party", a pressure group. It represents a majority of the American people. As Paul Douglas pointed out in the Senate, those who voted for the stronger position on Civil Rights (and were defeated by a Republican-Dixiecrat coalition) represent 60% of the American people and 70% of the Presidential electorate. The significance of these figures for the political future of Civil Rights - and for all progressive social change - is obvious.

In practical terms, the call made by A. Phillip Randolph and Martin Luther King for a massive political demonstration directed to the major party conventions is the obvious vehicle for relating the Civil Rights movement to the demand for political realignment. The very fact of such a demonstration, the simple challenge that both parties take a clear, consistent, unambiguous position in favor of practical measures for Civil Rights, is a blow at the hypocrisy and stalemate of the present party alignment.

Thirdly, this new stage in the Civil Rights movement has been a powerful force among all the youth of the United States. The students showed their support of the sit-ins through pickets, boycotts, collections of funds for the fighters in the South. The National Student Association, potentially the broadest and most significant framework for a revived student movement, played an important role in this process. Here, again, a myth was shattered. The theory of the passive and apathetic student, of the "silent" generation, began to crumble.

As this introduction is written, it is still not possible to assess how far this momentum will carry the student movement. However, we can point to a clear direction of development. The new enthusiasm among the students must take organizational form. There must be a continuation and expansion of student participation in the fight for Civil Rights. Then, this new vitality opens up the way to an even more general re-awakening: to a concern with South Africa as well as with South Carolina; to a commitment to political realignment; in short, to the emergence of a consciousness of the need of students to fight for human rights and freedom everywhere.

All of these factors are noted from a democratic socialist point of view. In closing, it would be well to define the relation of the democratic socialists to the Civil Rights movement.

First of all, members of the Young Peoples Socialist League (the YPSL is the youth section of the Socialist Party, America's democratic socialist organization, and the American section of the International Union of Socialist Youth, which unites hundreds of thousands of democratic socialists throughout the world) were in the forefront of the battle. In New York, Chicago, San Francisco - in almost every major American city - YPSLs participated in organizing support for the new stage of the Civil Rights movement. This is in keeping with the past history of the democratic socialist youth who have been leading activists in the Youth March for Integrated Schools and other important student demonstrations.

The YPSLs, we believe, have a unique contribution to make to this movement. Democratic socialists are committed to Civil Rights as a human value of tremendous worth in and of itself. They do not view the Civil Rights movements as a means to some devious, hidden socialist end, as an object of manipulation. Yet, as this pamphlet demonstrates, democratic socialists have a particular contribution to make to the movement. Seeing Civil Rights in its broader context, and relating this struggle to the general struggle for freedom, the socialists are open and public proponents of a policy of even more intensive and militant struggle. In this, we are able to join with non-socialists - with every supporter of Civil Rights - who see the necessity of infusing this new stage with a deeper content.

In this, the democratic socialists are to be differentiated from others who speak in the name of radicalism. The Communists, for instance, have constantly subordinated the Negro struggle to the needs of Russian foreign policy. During World War II, they attacked those, like A. Phillip Randolph, who argued that Negroes need not accept the idea of dying and working in the war against fascism on a Jim Crow basis. Their tactic did not develop out of the needs of America's Negroes, but rather it was a function of events in the Kremlin. Democratic socialists have always stood for the civil liberties of the Communists (and of all political groups); but they have always exposed this subordination of the Negro struggle to concealed and foreign interests.

Other radical groups, often speaking the language of "militancy", have made it clear that they regard the Civil Rights movement as an object of manipulation. They almost always set up their own special group; they act irresponsibly and without consultation and discussion with the actual rank-and-file leaders of the fight; and they dignify this adventuristic policy with demagogic attacks on the organizations which have been built by the people themselves.

As democratic socialists, we are open and public, and we are critical of those with whom we disagree in the Civil Rights movement. But we believe that the consciousness we seek must develop within the mainstream of the struggle. We are not so arrogant and foolish as to counterpose our socialist organization to the mass movement of the Negro people. We ask only to participate militantly in the movement and to have the right to put forth our own unique contribution to the fight.

This is the background of this pamphlet: a new stage of the struggle which confirms and gives immediacy to this analysis; the conception of loyal socialist participation in the movement and of the unique contribution which socialists can make. The views expressed in this essay are, broadly speaking, those of the YPSL. On historical and detailed questions, they represent the thought of the author. (The YPSL, as a broad, democratic socialist movement, contains a variety of opinion within the common commitment to democratic socialism.)

There could be no more timely a moment for the appearance of a pamphlet on the social roots of Jim Crow and the course of action which must be taken if this inhumanity is to be eradicated from American society.

--- National Education Committee
Young Peoples Socialist League

* * *

The Young Peoples Socialist League is a democratic socialist youth organization dedicated to building a society at the service of human needs. It believes that mankind can realize its fullest potential through the democratic ownership and control of the means of production. Consequently, it sees all conceptions of minority rule, like Communism, as the anti-thesis of socialism and believes that the voluntary, conscious participation of the people is the only way to the society it seeks. There are many different viewpoints within the YPSL, but this basic definition of democratic socialism is common to all of them and is the basis of YPSL membership. Here and now, the YPSL attempts to translate these principles into reality by actively engaging in all democratic movements of the people, for peace, freedom and human dignity.

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LET US LIVE TO MAKE MEN FREE

Race Prejudice and "Gradualism"

Among many "liberals"--and especially among their leading politicians--race prejudice is popularly regarded merely as a product of ignorance. The panacea is education, and a vague, hoped-for "public enlightenment," which in the salutary crucible of time, will gradually sap racism of its virulence and, ultimately, eradicate it altogether. To many, the problem of discrimination is one of confused philosophy and even theology (many Southerners cite Biblical texts in defense of white supremacy). If people would simply think the matter through, so the argument goes, they would discern the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in their beliefs and thereafter cease to practice Jim Crow.

This process, of course, takes time (presumably the Negro hasn't waited long enough) and requires that no severe pressures be applied to the South in this its "hour of crisis." Thus the philosophy of "gradualism." Many sincere people, attracted by what seems an appealing quality of reasonableness in this doctrine, have been confused as to the difference between what we might call gradualism and "gradualism." By the former (without quotation marks), we refer to the natural pace of historical processes and of social adjustment to them. By the latter (with quotation marks) we mean the political tactic that aims at slowing down these historic processes. Gradualism, of course, is something which one cannot be either for or against, just as one cannot, in a sense, be "for" or "against" the workings of history itself. "Gradualism," on the other hand, must be opposed by everyone who seeks the destruction of Jim Crow, for it attempts to sustain those institutions which the march of history has already demanded be discarded. Thus, to continue with the quotation marks, "gradualism" runs counter to, and frustrates gradualism. The clash of the two echoes in the Till case, in Little Rock, and in the lynching of Mack Parker.

In practical politics "gradualism" and "moderation" imply a middle course, a calm, level-headedness, as against the "extremism" of the NAACP on one side, and the White Citizens Councils on the other. This eclectic approach, tragic in its consequences, recoils from the ugly rhetoric and tactics of the Citizens Councils as "uncivilized" but at the same time accepts the racist characterization of the NAACP as "trouble-makers" churning the calm waters of Southern life, disturbing the peace. The "gradualist" pleads for peace and quiet. But there cannot be peace and quiet in the South today. The sediment of racial inequality, exploitation, backwardness and violence, long settled deep in the South, are inevitably to be churned up to the surface and swept away. In the interest of false peace and quiet, "gradualism" has been content to skim the surface, never disturbing the accumulated sediment. The effect has been to prolong the misery of the Southern Negro as well as the chaotic internal agony of the white South.

The conception of racism mainly as an aberration of intellect, as a product of ignorance, as a problem in adjustment, requiring time to work itself out--this leads to a pseudo-sociological "gradualism." This "gradualism" does not speed social adjustment, but, failing to present a strong counterposed social standard of law and order to replace the old, sustains the present moral and legal confusion which is the soil of violence in the South today. (For example, in the absence of a Federal anti-lynch law, where was the deterrent to the brutal murder of Emmett Till, the lynching of Mack Parker?)

Moreover, in addition to exacerbating racial conflict, this view of racism offers no understanding of the origins of Jim Crow. Indeed, it often implies that the practice of Jim Crow goes back to the first contact between the races, or at least to the commencement of the slave trade in the 16th century. Though we do not hear from the advocates of "gradualism" the backwoods' accounts of Jim Crow in Biblical times, we still get little illumination of the historical roots and growth of Jim Crow. Furthermore, if social science has taught us anything, it is that widespread thought-patterns, like legal systems, serve specific functions in society (though they outlast those functions). Just as the theories of the divine right of kings served to cushion royalty in authority and privilege, so do the doctrine of white supremacy and the codes of segregation operate to bolster certain interests in society at the expense of others.

Socialists, therefore, seek to identify those social forces--as they have developed historically--upon which the massive machinery and doctrine of racism rests. A very sketchy examination of the historical course of these forces is made in some of the following pages. The approach is necessarily general; the attempt is to draw an outline in broad strokes, indicating some fundamental factors to be understood in the current struggle--which is, after all, the primary concern of this pamphlet.

The History of Jim Crow

The first observation to be made in examining race relations in the South is that Jim Crow is a relatively recent phenomenon. In fact, the greater part of racial segregation is unborn until the last quarter of the last century. Here we must differentiate between segregation--that is, forced physical separation of the races by law--and the doctrine of white supremacy, since the latter considerably predates the former. In one form or another the belief in innate Negro inferiority has been a strain in virtually all previous relations between the races, owing to the fact that under virtually all previous relations the Negro was subordinated by whites; and ruling races, like ruling classes, must have an ideological defense to justify their exploitation. But it is also true that such ideologies may remain largely unexpressed and unelaborated until they are challenged. So it was with the doctrine of white supremacy in America: not until the slavocracy is challenged; on the moral level by the abolitionists and on the political-economic level by the rising Northern capitalism, does this doctrine become clearly defined and solidified.

The Antebellum South

If, as the 19th century wore on, the plantation system increasingly required legal and religious grounding in white supremacy, it still had no need of racial segregation. As C. Vann Woodward points out (The Strange Career of Jim Crow): "In so far as the Negro's status was fixed and proclaimed by enslavement there was no need or occasion to resort to segregation to establish his caste and subordination." Moreover, ". . . There were many aspects of plantation slavery that promoted intimacy between the races and rendered segregation impracticable. The supervision, care, exploitation and policing of slaves necessitated many contacts and accustomed the races in the South to a degree of intimacy unequalled in other parts of the country . . ."

Another basic factor militated against the rise of a rigid racial estrangement in the South, which remained in a frontier stage most of its antebellum history; the sparseness of population and the rural isolation of the plantation unit necessitated a relatively unrestricted social intermingling.

Although violence, always present in a frontier situation, was a hallmark of Southern life, and the South had become the "home of lynching," this violence was not directed specifically against the Negro. Of more than 300 persons said to have been hanged or burned by mobs between 1840 and 1860, less than 10% were Negroes. As one writer (W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South) observes, "So long as the Negro had been property, worth from \$500 up, he had been taboo--safer from rope and faggot than any common white man, and perhaps even safer than his master himself." (Contrast the reported figure of approximately 30 Negroes lynched between 1840-1860 to the number lynched between 1890-99: 1,111! The total in the 56 year period 1882-1938 was 3,397!)

Also to be contrasted against current Southern mores is the attitude then prevalent toward miscegenation, that is, racial inbreeding. "Efforts to build up a taboo against miscegenation," Cash reports, "made little real progress." In his The American Negro, Professor Melville Herskovits points out that "Instead of 80% or 85% of the American Negroes being wholly of African descent, only a little over 20% are unmixed, while almost 80% show mixture with white or American Indian." And all evidence indicates that this state of affairs had already been reached by 1860. Nor is it to be thought that the mulatto arose as the result only of union between the Negro and "white trash." That the plantation owner indulged in not infrequent interracial sexual adventures is documented as vividly in Southern fiction as in sociological studies.

What conclusions do we draw from this run-down on race relations in the antebellum South? Certainly not that the Negro was better off under slavery, (unless we accept the limited criterion of segregation). It must be emphasized that Negro life in the antebellum South was by no means the idyllic scene painted by many Southern historians and romanticists. The very nature of the work on the plantations, of forced labor itself, was a cruel oppression against which many thousands of Negroes, with the help of sympathetic whites, continually rebelled. (Accounts of the Underground Railway provide dramatic illustration of the discontent and misery among the slaves.)

Further, the legend of racial harmony in slavery times has no basis in fact. If Southern whites speak fondly of having been suckled by Negro "mammies," we should at least remember that few slaves were "mammies"--the great bulk of Negroes worked in the fields, not as household servants, and in the fields the white master ruled with the whip. And the plantation experience has not yet been washed out of the American Negro. In its effects on his personality, family structure, social life and organization, slavery erased the African experience and imprinted upon him the caste-stamp of the South.

We make no concession to racist genetics when we recognize certain social and cultural characteristics peculiar to the American Negro. These characteristics are the product of an historical environment. That they are being gradually outgrown explodes the myth that they are genetically determined. We are told that the Negro is lazy. The stereotype is based largely on the portrait of the Negro slave. What the racists neglect to add is that slavery has induced a kind of indolence among

all people who have been subjected to it, since servitude, though it exacts labor, cannot stimulate personal industry. Precisely because slavery has been the lot of the Negro as a race in this country, characteristics common to all enslaved people appear peculiar to the Negro.

If it is also true that Negroes long lacked effective leadership, this is because the whip does not encourage initiative. If in Negro families today the father is often a weak figure, this is because, for one thing, he had under slavery no family over which to preside, and for another, the mother was better able to avoid the total humiliation and disintegration that fell to the male field slave (Related to this is the fact that chronic unemployment weakens the position of the father figure in any group).^{*} The inferiority complex of the Negro lingers on and is buttressed by modern racism. All in all, the Old South's distortion of the Negro personality and psychology was immeasurably deep and scarring.

No, we cannot conclude that the Negro was better off under slavery. But we do conclude--indeed, it is not a conclusion but a fact--that the huge fabric of racial segregation, all pervasive and intricately designed to cover the remotest racial contact points, codified and reinforced by law and lynchrope--this did not come into being until the last years of the 1880's. Only 80 years ago! All that the racists have so long been bellowing about the absolute inherent incompatibility of the races is false. Upon examination, it turns out that segregation of the races is not a matter of divine design, but is an historical development; it came about in a specific determinable period of time as the result of specific economic, social and political forces in 19th century America. Segregation and discrimination continue to exist largely because the outmoded patterns built into American life by these forces continue to exist.

Before we attempt to describe these forces and to discuss how they are to be dealt with if the Negro is to win equal rights, let us go back briefly to the "liberal-gradualist" approach. If many of the pertinent facts about race relations in the antebellum South are concealed by the racists in order to maintain that segregation is super-historical and the divinely inspired natural order of things, these same facts are also often ignored by liberals. For, if you believe that the source of racial tension is simply in what people traditionally "think" and "feel" how can you explain the transformation in the thinking and feeling of the white Southerner in regard to the Negro in the comparatively short time between the years, say, 1840-1870. How are thinking and feeling determined--and changed? If prejudice is the product of segregation and segregation is the product of prejudice--and you have nothing more to say about it--how is the cycle to be broken? As we indicated above, the failure of "gradualism" to attack the sedimentary sources of prejudice and segregation encourages the persistence of prejudice and segregation.

The Rise of Jim Crow

The view has gained currency that racial segregation in the South was a vengeful reaction to the harshness of Reconstruction. Actually, the massive segregation campaigns did not begin until ten years after the end of Reconstruction. That the period immediately following Reconstruction was marked by race conflict and violence is true. But before this conflict could take the path of total segregation, disfranchisement and ostracism, something else had to happen--and did:

^{*}After the Emancipation Proclamation, Negro women were often the sole breadwinners in the family, since it was easier for them to get work as domestics than for their husbands. It should be noted here too, that more Negro women worked than did white.

the withdrawal and collapse of restraining non-racist forces in both the North and South.

The outstanding signal of this collapse was, of course, the Compromise of 1877 marking the formal end of Reconstruction. The mechanics of the largely secret Compromise boiled down to this: In return for conceding the election of Hays to the Republicans (although Tilden had the majority of the popular vote, and undoubtedly should have received the majority of the electoral vote), the Southern Democrats extracted the promise that federal troops would be withdrawn from the South and the two remaining Republican governments in Louisiana and South Carolina would be abandoned. This deal, notable in American history as a high point in disregard of the democratic process, still was not the climax of indifference to the Southern Negro. Much had developed before the deal could have taken place, and much of the course of national politics was acumbrated by it.

At the end of the Civil War, the Democratic Party in the South had come to be more and more under the domination of the old Whigs. Never satisfied with membership in the Democratic Party (into which they had been forced by the pressures of the anti-Republicanism of the Civil War), the Whigs were in the main the business-oriented, commercially-minded elements in the South. By and large, as Van Woodward points out, "they supported Henry Clay's nationalistic and capitalistic program of a protective tariff and a national bank." Conservative and class-conscious, the Whigs identified more with the representatives of expanding Northern industry than with their poor white brothers in the South. They tended to shrink from the anti-Negro violence of the racists and emphasized class distinctions as opposed to race distinctions.

The economic ties of the Whigs to the Northern Republicans is a key factor in explaining the Compromise of 1877. Both groups shared in common the desire to avert the chaos and bloodshed which seemed promised by the Hays-Tilden jam-up. (In many Southern cities small armies were being organized to march on Washington and forcibly install Tilden.) Not only did the Whigs see the gathering storm as a threat to the business enterprises they had been building up since the war, but they also had cause to clash increasingly with their fellow Democrats in the North. Largely in reaction against the business scandals that rocked the Grant administration, the Democratic House Appropriations Committee adopted a tight money policy and killed federal funds for "improvements" and public works programs in the South. This same Committee, by the way, had announced its intention of cutting off funds for the maintenance of troops in the South, so that Hays would, as he knew, have had to withdraw them in any case. Thus, the removal of federal troops could not have been the main goal of the South in the compromise. Essential to the Compromise of 1877 were the promises of investment capital that the Whigs elicited from the Republicans.

Although the removal of federal troops from the South stripped the Negro of protection against violence, it by no means resulted immediately in segregation and disfranchisement. More than twenty years would pass before the Negro would finally be placed under a full-fledged Jim Crow system.

The new alliances that brought about the Compromise of 1877 would need time to mature before their full impact would be felt. So far only Northern liberalism had abandoned the Negro. For reasons we shall go into later, this abandonment configured the final collapse of the restraining, non-racists forces which made

way for Jim Crow. First, it is necessary to examine politics in the South itself.

So completely is the one-party system of the South accepted today, that it is easy to forget that Democratic rule did not always prevail unchallenged there. Van Woodward reminds us of the time when "a Southerner was no more presumed to be a member of a particular party than was a Northerner. In fact such a presumption was rather more risky in the case of the Southerner than in the case of the citizens of certain other regions. For the antebellum South, particularly during the 1830's and 1840's, divided over pretty much the same questions that divided other sections politically. And the South, moreover, divided closely, with no more than a narrow margin for the victor, and victory never a sure thing for either of the major parties." (Reunion and Reaction)

Political conflict in the South was, following the general rule, a reflection of class conflict. At first, this conflict was slow to sharpen in the South. Even after the invention of the cotton gin and the consequent relegation of the poor whites to infertile lands, the social mobility associated with frontier life dulled consciousness of social distinction.

But somewhat before the Civil War, as the big plantations grew bigger, their slave holding multiplying, and small trading towns grew into large commercial centers for the sale of cotton, class antagonisms did develop. Before the war they were still embryonic, vague stirrings, unorganized and for the most part undefined. (Here the fact should be noted, though not overworked, that there are recorded numerous incidents of poor whites aiding and helping to organize slave revolts during the decade 1850-60, when slave escapes ran particularly high).

The effect of the Civil War, in ruining the South economically through the abolition of slavery and the imposition of excessive tax burdens, was to tend to level out these growing class feelings. Class loyalties were subordinated to race loyalty as the white Southern brotherhood joined hands to fight Yankeedom. In place of the plantation owner, the free Negro now stood in the eyes of the poor whites as the enemy. Even in the earliest periods of incipient social stratification, the poor white, at the bottom rung of the economic ladder, began to regard the Negro as inferior in order to avoid the conclusion that he was himself the lowest of the low in society. The ideology of white supremacy, which had grown now into a consolidated doctrine, provided the poor white with a psychological mechanism through which he could identify himself with the ruling class, in color if not in economic status, and thus lay claim to a cultural heritage ludicrously beyond the scope of his real condition.

At the end of the War, class antagonisms began to re-emerge. The futile attempts of the South to restore its economy through concentration on cotton ("King Cotton") aggravated the conditions of the poor white, who was expropriated and in large part converted into the white tenant and sharecropper, "the head and front of the poor white class from that day to this: a mighty and always multiplying horde of the landless, who, in order to eat, must turn to laboring for their more fortunate neighbors on whatever terms the latter offered."

Under the pressure of a new group of local banker-merchants and, primarily, of the Northern dealers, the cotton growers, in order to reap profits out of a basically unprofitable enterprise, ruthlessly exploited the poor white class, and

as a weapon in this exploitation, encouraged hatred of the Negro. The lower the white tenant farmer sank into the economic bondage that had been the lot of the slave, the stronger grew his hostility toward the Negro, over whom he sought to assert his mastery through violence and adherence to the doctrine of white supremacy. The poor white, who previously had his own plot of land, however unproductive, now found himself in competition with the Negro on a level which for all intents and purposes was comparable to slavery. And as long as the expropriated whites focused their hostility on the Negro, and not on their exploiters among the banker-merchant interests, backed by Northern capital, those interests were safe. There is no question but that the poor white's absorption in Negrophobia constituted the primary psychological deterrent to his perceiving clearly his own social and economic plight.

In 1891, however, a movement did grow up that challenged the racial solidarity of the poor whites. The Populists attracted masses of poor farmers and workers under a banner of class action. Addressing himself directly to the problem of color prejudice, Georgia Populist leader Tom Watson told the two races: "You are made to hate each other because upon that hatred is rested the keystone of the arch of financial despotism which enslaves you both. You are deceived and blinded that you may not see how this race antagonism perpetuates a monetary system which beggars you both." Though relatively short-lived, Populism played a dramatic role in race relations. It made remarkable inroads in the poor white's Negrophobia and demonstrated the revolutionary possibilities of Negro-poor white unity against the big planters and capitalists. Equally important, Populism recruited and trained Negro political leaders, and elected them to offices on a par with whites.

But the Populists also succumbed and eventually abandoned the Negro. They were crushed by the conservatives, who used their domination of the Black Belt to pile up votes against the Populists and for white supremacy. Negroes in the Black Belt were intimidated by the conservatives to oppose the rising tide of Populism and if intimidation didn't work, thousands of ballots were forged. The result of this was a growing disillusionment with the Negro among Watson and the Populists. They had always had a hard enough time as it was selling their radical approach to race relations; now Negro opposition (though manipulated) to their program convinced many that the Negro was indeed the enemy of the poor white. By the end of the 90's the movement had reversed its attitude toward the Negro, and thus ended an extraordinary chapter in interracial class action in the South.

Three restraining political currents had to disengage or be driven from defense of the Negro before racism could triumph in the South. The first, Northern liberalism (Radical Republicanism) withdrew in 1877. The second, Populism, abandoned the Negro in the late 1890's. Conservatism was the third. It did not so much disengage as it did deteriorate into something quite different from its traditional form. Morally undermined by its manipulation of the Negro, and economically threatened by the increasingly resentful depression-weary poor whites, Conservatism became less capable of acting as a bulwark against racism. (Previously, we recall, the Conservatives had eschewed racial violence and had tended to emphasize class distinctions over race distinctions.)

The course taken by any of these major currents was intimately related to the course of the others. When the North withdrew its troops, it left the South in the hands, not of the racists (the old Democrats), but of the conservatives (the old Whigs). The Compromise of 1877 was a deal made between Northern and Southern

industrialists, that is, between the Republicans and the Old Whig conservatives, who identified with each other's interests, whose common aims transcended sectional differences, and who would tend to react similarly to a given situation. Thus the disengagement of the Republicans, while it did not deliver the Negro directly into the hands of the racists, nonetheless foreshadowed the later disengagement (or deterioration) of the conservatives. When the Republicans let the bottom out from under the Negro, he fell into the net of the conservatives. When that net collapsed, he had nowhere to fall but down to the rock-bottom of racism.

How could the North, which presumably had liberated the Negro from slavery, permit him to be disfranchised, segregated and terrorized?

Beneath the genuinely moral outcry against slavery on the part of the abolitionists and many men of good will, the essential interests of the rapidly industrializing Northern capitalism was the destruction of the semi-feudal plantation system, which was incompatible with the overall technological growth of the nation into a world power. Because slavery was at the base of this plantation system, it was outlawed in the course of the Civil War as a means of bringing the South to its knees economically.

However, once the Civil War ended, and the Reconstruction had in effect secured hegemony for the Northern capitalists over the Southern economy, the old motives--having been satisfied--gave way to new ones, which revealed the extent to which the industrialists really had the interest of the Negro at heart. For, in the last decades of the 19th century, textile factories began to spring up in mills, which also provided a new source of employment for the poor whites, exploitation was even more ruthless than on the cotton farms, and the trend toward racial segregation became even more acute.

The cheap labor market--the South's main attraction for Northern capital--depended in large measure upon segregation and discrimination, as it does to this day. The Negro, without a vote and without a union card, has little to say about his wages and is up against a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. In addition, the presence of a politically disfranchised and economically uprooted Negro population represented a threat to the poor whites because if the latter sought to improve their economic status, their bosses could always threaten to turn them out and give their jobs to Negroes who, in desperation, would work for less.

Thus, the Northern capitalist, having first required the liberation of the Negro as a means of decimating the semi-feudal plantation economy, now watched contentedly the political disfranchisement and economic depression of the Negro in the interest of a new exploitation, the profits from which would now accrue to the Northern industrial ruling class, rather than to its Southern Bourbon counterpart.

To sum up, then: the gigantic and pervasive structure of racial segregation and discrimination, of race hate and violence, of elaborate theories of white supremacy, grew up, in the main, after the Civil War, after the defeat of the South, after Northern capital had established national hegemony and domination of the Southern economy.

The Economics of Jim Crow

This discussion of the historic roots of Jim Crow in the United States would be of little value if it did not give us insight into the nature of the problems confronting the Negro today in his struggle for equality--and this, after all, is our major concern.

The economic base of Jim Crow--the need for cheap labor--far from having disappeared in the 20th century, remains today. Despite the advances made by the Negro, he and other minority groups still provide exploited sources of profit for Big Business, and not only in the South. Although, largely through the labor movement, the Negro and Puerto Rican have experienced some economic and social elevation in the North, these groups still provide the raw human material for countless sweatshops and factories at incredibly low wages. And the dirty jobs--janitorial workers, porters, domestics, etc.--are filled almost exclusively by Negroes and Puerto Ricans, who are shut out from better employment. In New York, Chicago, Detroit--all the major industrial centers--there is affixed to the personality of the Negro the image of the menial, unskilled worker, an image which degrades him in his own eyes and which acts to reinforce the belief among whites that the Negro is suited only for these jobs.

That exploitation of the Negro and other minority groups is a continuing factor in the United States is documented by Herbert Hill, NAACP labor secretary, who pointed out in an address before the 10th Constitutional Convention of the United Furniture Workers of America, the following facts:

"In 1954 the average wage or salary income of a Negro worker had risen to \$1,589, while the average white worker earned \$3,174 . . .

"In 1954, 17.6% of all white families in the U.S. were living on an annual income of \$2,000 or less, but of non-white families, 42.3% were living on an annual income below \$2,000."

Not only do Negroes as a whole receive much lower wages than whites, they are also the first to suffer in times of economic crisis:

"During the week of March 9, 1958, 14.4% of the total non-white civilian labor force in the U.S. was unemployed. The comparable rate for white workers was 6.9%. Although only one out of every ten persons in the U.S. labor force is non-white, more than one out of every 5 persons currently employed is non-white.

"Almost without exception during the entire period since the 1953-4 recession, the unemployment gap between whites and non-whites has been greater than prior to 1954. During the past 3 years, the non-white unemployment rate has been almost consistently double the white unemployment rate . . . All available data clearly indicates that the rate of unemployment among non-whites as compared to that of whites has been steadily increasing since 1951 . . .

Mr. Hill concludes, "It is therefore evident that despite great changes in the employment and occupational characteristics of the Negro workers in the last decade, the economic level of Negroes remains substantially below that of the white population."

What does "substantially" mean? It means that the wages of the Negro are half those of the white, his rate of unemployment double!

What does Big Business in America get out of this? According to the National Labor Service, "minorities . . . would have earned \$72 billion, given equal opportunity and earning power. Actually, they earned only \$42 billion (per year)" That's \$30 billion a year in business profits! Is it any wonder that representatives of Big Business in the Republican Party line up with the Dixiecrats to defeat meaningful Civil Rights legislation in Congress? And is it any wonder that these same forces combine to push for anti-labor legislation? (It is no accident that the Landrum-Griffin bill derives its name from a Republican advocate of unfettered "free enterprise" and a Southern Democrat respectively). For a strong labor movement threatens to organize Negro workers in the South (and in this the just outlawed "secondary boycott" is a valuable weapon), and no union would permit its members to work for \$1,589 a year.

Jim Crow and Southern Politics

It should not be thought from the above discussion that conditions of the Negro are the same all over the country, or that racism has the same function for the Southern rulers that it has for Big Business. Although in the South, as well as in the North, employer interests stand to gain from the suppression of the Negro, segregation in the South has an additional dimension: it is the basis of political rule. The Democratic Party in New York, as corrupt and despicable as it is, does not rule on the basis of segregation. In the South, it does. That is to say the political machine that has ruled the South for many decades could not continue to win elections if it permitted Negroes to vote! The Senators and governors elected to office in the South today are elected by tiny minorities. In 1954, it required only 100,848 votes for Eastland to return to the Senate. Since the population of Mississippi in that year was 2,100,000, Eastland's position is based on the votes of less than 5% of the people of his own state. It is on such a thin base that Southern rule is perched. Up to this day, Southern Senators and governors receive smaller votes than the number of Negroes alone barred from the polls--to say nothing of poor whites (and in many Southern states there are even more poor whites disfranchised.) Not only is the South a one-party region, but that one party is a minority party whose candidates would be roundly defeated at the polls tomorrow if all citizens, regardless of color, were allowed to vote.

The rule of the Democratic Party in the South has meant not only the suppression of the Negro, but the suppression of the poor white, the sharecropper, the migrant farm worker as well. For, as we have indicated, the Southern Senators and Congressmen join with the conservative Republicans in Congress to restrict the labor movement, which is the only hope of these classes for social, economic and political advancement. Senator Eastland, who just happens to own 4,000 acres of good Southern farmland, which just happens to be worked by sharecroppers, would not be very happy to see a union on his grounds. And Eastland is not the exception. Government and economy in the South are in the grip of white supremacists and segregationists; they man the police forces; they don judicial robes and run the courts; they own the textile mills, the tobacco factories, the cotton and soybean and sugar plantations and processing plants. Their political and economic power hinges on the degradation of the Negro.

Despite the fact that Southern politicians are elected by piddling minorities in their own states, the influence and power they wield on the national political scene is prodigious. Thirteen Southern states elect 26 Senators and 120 Representatives. This meant, in 1954 for example, that they had, of the Democratic Congressional caucus, 26 out of 49 Senators and 120 out of 232 Representatives--a majority of the Party apparatus in both Houses. Thus, in order for the Dixiecrats to become a minority, the Party would have to gain a considerable victory over the Republicans. And if they won such a victory? The racists would become a numerical minority but their grip on the machinery of Congress would still be unloosened; for we would again witness the grotesque elevation of Eastland to the chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Because Eastland and Company are returned to Congress again and again (by the privileged franchised few in their constituencies) they have accumulated more seniority than any other group on Capitol Hill, and by the rules of Congress, committee chairmanships are awarded to the senior members of the majority party. It's as simple as that. So simple that the election to Congress of any Democrat, however liberal, from whatever part of the country, is in effect a vote for Eastland as chairman of the all-important Senate Judiciary Committee--the Committee through which all Civil Rights legislation is filtered.

If these then are briefly the roots of discrimination and segregation; if these are the functions they serve in our society and the obstacles they present, how has the Negro moved against them?

The Negro's Fight for Freedom

The struggle of the Negro for equality represents one of the most heroic aspects of American history. Heroic not only because it was fought frequently in the face of lynch mobs and at the risk of life and limb, but also because it was all too often fought without major white allies. Throughout most of the last and present century, with the exception of significant sections of the growing labor movement and not-always-steadfast-liberals, the Northern white community, having supported the liberation of the Negro to the point of toppling the impedimentary plantation system, was content to abandon the Negro to the new wage-slavery.

As mentioned previously, the Negro under slavery was not so submissive and content a creature as many have made him out to be. The slave revolts of the 18th and 19th centuries, as yet a largely unexplored historical phenomenon, are touchstones of the cruelty of the plantation system and a starting point for any examination of the Negro protest movement. Best known of the uprisings was the Gabriel plot of 1800, which involved up to 50,000 Negroes and nearly managed to take Richmond; the Denmark Vessey conspiracy of 1822, which planned to take Charleston, seize the ships and return to Africa; and the Nat Turner uprising in 1831, also near Richmond. There were also others. The defeated leaders were often hanged, burned alive, their heads displayed on poles, etc. This was the fate of a group of Negroes who marched on New Orleans in 1811 and were defeated after pitched battle with regular troops.

In tracing the origins of organized, national Negro protest, we have reference to two conflicting tendencies among Negro leaders, coming to a head at the beginning of this century. For a small number of freed Negroes (the so-called "Talented Tenth") higher educational opportunities had been made available at the newly opened Negro colleges (Fisk, Atlanta, Howard, Hampton, etc.) and out of this number grew the beginnings of a Negro intelligentsia. From this intelligentsia

would spring the leadership of the civil rights movement. One of the products, probably the most outstanding, of the new Negro university was W. E. B. DuBois.

The Negro movement at this time was dominated by the conciliatory policies of Booker T. Washington. Washington and his followers advocated a program of industrial training and economic self-elevation as the road to Negro advancement. Setting up technical training schools, advising thrift and attention to mechanical abilities, the Washington group assiduously avoided any actions that might antagonize white people, and de-emphasized the importance of higher education as well as social and political equality. "The wisest of my race," wrote Washington, "understand that agitation of questions of social equality is of the extremest folly." The wisest of his race was soon to repudiate Washington's timid approach.

The growing antipathy among Negro intellectuals to Washington's conciliatory policies found for its spokesman W.E.B. DuBois. The latter's platform included a "stoppage to the campaign of Negro depreciation" and a militant program for the achievement of political, social and economic equality.

In 1904 a conference between the two forces took place at Carnegie Hall in New York City. DuBois demanded that "the general watchword must be, not to put forth dependence on the help of the whites, but to organize for self help, encouraging 'manliness without defiance, conciliation without servility'." Out of this conference came the Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race.

In 1905 DuBois quit the Committee of Twelve when it became obvious that it was the tool of Washington, and he organized the Niagara Movement (named after its meeting place in Niagara Falls, New York). The movement had as its main objectives active opposition to the reactionary policies of Washington and the generation of a more militant policy of struggle against Jim Crow. It consisted of an all-Negro intelligentsia of doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers and preachers -- 54 men representing 18 states.

In 1909 the NAACP was formed out of a union between DuBois' Niagara Movement and white Northern liberals and socialists of the abolitionist tradition. As a result of a series of race riots that had occurred in this period -- the most brutal having taken place in Lincoln's hometown of Springfield, Illinois -- white liberals were aroused and the Abolitionist spirit enjoyed something of a moderate revival. Leading whites in the formation of the NAACP included William English Walling, Mary Ovington, Dr. Henry Moskowitz, Oswald Garrison Villard, Jane Adams, William Lloyd Garrison, J.G. Phelps Stokes and John Haynes Holmes. (Socialists can take pride in recalling that most of these white founders of the NAACP -- as well as DuBois for a time -- were members of the Socialist Party. DuBois, unfortunately, abandoned the Socialist Party and became a Communist. The loss of this brilliant mind to the most vulgar Stalinist apologetics -- and hence isolation -- was a tragedy for the Negro people.) The officers of the new organization were white with the exception of DuBois. The program was almost identical to that of the Niagara Movement. By 1914 there were thirteen Negro members on the Board of Directors; to this day the Association is interracial at the top and overwhelmingly Negro at its base.

Today the NAACP has some 320,000 members and stands at the head of the civil rights movement in the United States. Although its leadership remains almost entire-

ly middle-class, its base has been broadened in recent years to the point where the Association's membership is working class in its majority. In the South, where half of its chapters are located, it has played a courageous role against dangerous odds. Its leaders have been threatened, blacklisted, beaten and murdered. And, in many parts of the South, the Constitution and Bill of Rights would be totally inoperative for the Negro people without the NAACP. It is the only continuing organizational form of influence that has grown out of the fight for civil rights.

The NAACP is thus the central organization of American Negroes and the civil rights struggle. It has stood at the forefront time and again in the progress made by American Negroes toward equality. To all Negroes, and to all enemies of the Negro too, it stands first and foremost -- a position it highly deserves.

Yet of course as socialists, as supporters of militant civil rights actions we see inadequacies and weaknesses in its present approach which we feel must rapidly be faced by its membership and leadership. There are some radicals and militants who have for one reason or another abandoned the NAACP in discouragement or disillusionment, or have for sectarian, ultra-radical reasons never approached it. We can understand and sympathize with some of their critique, but their solution tragically misses understanding the crucial role of the NAACP and the deserved attachment of the Negro community to it.

In today's climate especially, a weakening of the NAACP would be a critical victory for those seeking to hold back the Negro. Demoralization with the NAACP does not, has not and will not lead to a better movement for civil rights. This is not to say that the other groups in the field, CORE, local committees, the American Negro Labor Committee, etc., do not play a vital role and should not be supported. Nevertheless if there is no central organization, but simply many groups working in many different areas with separate and devoted memberships, the whole movement will lack focus, will lack that mass public voice. The NAACP thus remains essential as a unifying force.

We urge those who criticize it for being "slower" than they wish or more bureaucratic than they consider desirable to participate more fully in the NAACP. Only through greater -- not less -- support can the NAACP respond to the challenge before it.

As the NAACP has developed, it has tended to devote the greater part of its energies to working through the courts. In part, this emphasis can be understood in terms of the handicap under which the organized civil rights movement has had to fight for most of its life: the principle of racial equality had had no legal expression. No protection was afforded the Negro under the courts. The situation today has changed, and there must be a corresponding change in the strategy of the NAACP.

Important as court action is in the movement for civil rights, it is only one weapon and when depended upon to the exclusion of other weapons can become virtually meaningless. Militant political activity, above and beyond litigation, on the part of the Negro is essential in determining what decisions the courts will make with regard to civil rights and whether the decision will be enforced. In the absence of this activity the Court can always rule adversely (and has a long history of doing so); ultimate faith cannot be placed in the wisdom of any handful of men.

The historic 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation did not even pretend to be based solely on technical legal precedents with no relation to the sociological and political implications of segregation in the U.S. There is no question but that the Court also took into account the fact that segregation is an albatross around the government's neck in the Cold War, discrediting us among the uncommitted in Asia and Africa. Undoubtedly too, it took into account the protest an unfavorable decision would have incited among Negroes at home and the embarrassment this would have caused us abroad in terms of the image of national unity. If the American Negro were not growing impatient with the immoral acquiescence of the federal government in segregation, if he were still a submissive minority in public life, who could say the Supreme Court would not have had an easier time in upholding school segregation? To believe this is to reveal an ignorance of fundamental politics.

The 1954 decision also points up the necessity for mass political mobilization in terms of the enforcement of Court decisions. For, although the organization of the Negro has set the groundwork for the enunciation of the principle of school desegregation, it has not been such as to succeed in effecting its enforcement. On October 12, 1959, the Supreme Court refused to review two decisions upholding the constitutionality of the insidious pupil-placement laws and rejecting Negro suits to make school boards draft total desegregation plans. Thus, the Court has opened the way for the substitution of token integration for real integration.

At this writing, the 1954 decision, however, has been primarily effective only in the Border states! Almost 6 years after the decision, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida and South Carolina have taken virtually no steps toward school integration. And, according to the National Labor Service, "five other states--Arkansas, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas--are either divided in their compliance with the Court's ruling or are delaying desegregation." Furthermore, the New York Times recently reported that 94% of all Negro students in the South still attend segregated classes. With the Supreme Court's action last October 12th, the South now has a legal device with which to delay integration further.

In the April 3, 1959 issue of Look, Fred Rodell, professor of law at Yale University, pointed out that "without a criminal statute, desegregation has no teeth . . . Without more and more Supreme Court decisions / which have not been forthcoming / the South can go on using all manner of devices that get around the letter of the original ruling until each in its turn is forbidden."

Obviously, to end segregation under these terms would take decades. There are 10,000 school boards in the defiant states. In each county Negroes would have to press for admission in the face of local intimidation from their landlord. They would have to appeal to the court against school boards, then for contempt citations, and then? Years pass . . .

Here we have a parallel with the development of the labor movement in the U.S. The Wagner Act did not organize a single union. It established the right to organize, but set no criminal penalties for violating this right. A cumbersome machinery was set up. One case against Weirton Steel finally reached a conclusion some ten years after it had been begun; by then the union was dead. Nevertheless the legal logjam was broken not in the courts, but as unionism won its decisive victories in sit down strikes and on picket lines!

Likewise the Supreme Court decision does not in itself force the desegregation of a single school! It puts the question in a new legal framework and prepares a thousand court cases. But equality can become a reality, the decision can be enforced, only if teeth are put into it. And this means unremitting pressure from below.

It is not enough--indeed it is sometimes futile--to secure victories in the courts, unless Congress passes legislation putting teeth into the victories, unless Congress makes it a crime to violate one's civil rights. Part III of the Douglas-Javits Civil Rights Bill was precisely such a piece of legislation. Thanks to the reactionary Republican-Dixiecrat coalition in Congress, this Bill was shelved and a meaningless, watered-down version put in its place.

What was accomplished by the similarly watered-down Civil Rights Act of 1957? This Act set up two principal bodies--the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and the Civil Rights Commission. Their achievements to date have been pathetic. The Civil Rights Division has not yet enabled one Negro to vote! This is the judgment not of the NAACP, but of the Division's sibling, the Civil Rights Commission. Of the three voting cases it has brought before the Federal courts two have been thrown out, the third has not yet been tried. The Division has functioned so poorly that the Commission has asked Congress for the right to represent itself from now on! Nor has the Civil Rights Commission been able to do very much, for while segregation and disfranchisement deprive the Negroes and other minority groups of 30 billion dollars a year in wages, Congress has granted the Commission only \$750,000 for its work.

Thus we are confronted by a cycle of inaction, whereby the civil rights decisions by the Court are gutted by the failure of Congress to set up enforcement machinery, and also by the reluctance of the executive branch of government to use the enforcement powers it already has (which is not too surprising since the President of the United States still refuses to make a statement in favor of the school desegregation decision).

Referring to the President's Committee on Government Contracts, the N.Y. Times of November 16th, 1959 reported that "instead of asking contractors for a generalized and practically unenforceable commitment not to discriminate, the committee is now seeking a specific promise to hire Negroes for new jobs immediately. The same government that filed an injunction automatically sending half a million steelworkers back to the plants tells us it is incapable of enforcing non-discrimination in companies getting government contracts--paid for by Negro and white taxpayers! Rather than pursue this essential task, which strikes at the heart of the problem, the President's Committee has decided instead to persuade a handful of contractors to hire or upgrade two handfuls of Negroes. The Times article goes on to state that "It (the Committee) can ask the contracting department of the Government to cancel a contract because of discriminatory hiring policies, and it has asked occasionally. But no department has yet broken a contract for that reason."

To sum up: Experience has shown that working through the courts is an important, but very limited aspect of the struggle. The courts can make high-sounding statements of principle, but if Congress does not provide law-enforcement legislation, such statements are virtually meaningless. Congress and the Executive may unleash floods of righteous rhetoric, they may set up innumerable committees and subcommittees, but in the testing the rhetoric has been revealed to be

transparent hypocrisy and the committees and subcommittees a mere multiplicity of letterheads. If this situation is to be reversed, it must be by the relentless pressure of an organized, militant movement of the Negro masses themselves--not just their lawyers and specialists--fighting on all fronts, for social, political and economic equality.

The Negro and Mass Action

Developments in this direction have been encouraged by two outstanding Negro leaders: A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, whose March on Washington Movement (1941-2) forced Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, setting up the FEPC; and Rev. Martin Luther King, leader of the Montgomery Bus Protest and President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Both are supporters of the NAACP, but have urged a program which, while continuing litigation, recognized the necessity for mass mobilization to maintain pressure on the agencies of government. Under their leadership, thousands and tens of thousands of people have organized outside of the big political machines in direct action projects on behalf of civil rights.

In 1956, the Montgomery Bus Protest strangled segregation in the city's buses as 50,000 Negroes for months traveled by foot and swiftly-organized car pools. The success of this spontaneous and heroic struggle resounded internationally and projected the symbol of a new spirited independence stirring in the Southern Negro. For, in addition to its tactical victory, the Montgomery movement offered the Negro citizens the opportunity to participate bodily, directly, in the winning of their freedom. The almost total absence from the Montgomery Negro population of criminal offense during the protest indicates the importance of deep involvement in social struggle as a constructive release from the frustrations and humiliations of segregation and discrimination.

(Unfortunately, owing both to its structure and political orientation, the NAACP has not provided such involvement on a mass scale. The NAACP, as mentioned above, has placed almost exclusive emphasis on working through the courts. Obviously, the intricacies of litigation do not offer possibilities of wide participation. A further example is the National Board's suspension of Robert Williams, president of the Union County, N. C. branch when he called upon Negroes to "meet violence with violence." More important than the bureaucratic procedure of the Board is the fact that the Williams statement grew out of a widespread frustration in the Negro community. This frustration the NAACP has failed to channel through the organization and direction of mass action along the lines of the Montgomery Project.)

Organized on the heels of the Montgomery victory, the Prayer Pilgrimage brought some 17,000 Negroes and whites to Washington in celebration of the third anniversary of the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision. The moving spirits behind the event, financially backed by the NAACP, were A. Philip Randolph and Martin King.

The 1958 Youth March for Integrated Schools, also led by the Randolph-King forces not only dropped the religious format, but addressed itself to youth, organizing an interracial march of 10,000 young people to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. This time, however, while Roy Wilkins permitted the use of his name, the position of the NAACP was one of cool non-involvement. The Association's leadership was prepared to support a prayerful congregation of adults in Washington, but it was unwilling to encourage youth in a "demonstration of solidarity with their embattled fellow students of the South."

However, the extraordinary success of the first March and the pressures it had built up in a wide variety of groups forced the NAACP's leadership to urge full chapter participation in the second March. On April 18, 1959, 30,000 young people converged on Washington, bearing 400,000 signatures to petitions demanding federal action to ensure speedy school integration. The significance of the second March lay to a large extent in the fact that, triple the size of its predecessor, it succeeded in prying a reception from the White House, which had ignored the October March.

While, as socialists, we do not expect much in the way of civil rights to come through benign concessions from the White House, and do not place much hope in the President's promises, the fact remains that in the context of forcing recognition from the government and wresting propaganda concessions--which is all such demonstrations as presently conceived can expect--the White House reception demonstrated the bargaining power inherent in numbers.

That the Marches did not project the militancy socialists believe was demanded by the occasions, and did not make the political impact on Washington politicians that many of its more naive supporters had hoped for, indicates not the inherent implausibility of mass activity, but the weakness of its present stage of organization.

At the end of the projects, the local Youth March Committees that had sprung into action in scores of communities and schools petered out, lacking the nourishment of continued activity. Large demonstrations serve to arouse mass support, to give notice of strength, to culminate campaigns; but demonstrations cannot take the place of constant, organized grass roots activity, which involves the great mass of the Negro people on a day-to-day basis, which becomes part of them, their own movement. This is the lesson and meaning of the Montgomery Bus Protest. And this is the experience, too, of the American labor movement. The parallel is not superficial. It is profound in its implications. For both movements, there were very few friends indeed on the court benches, in the government, in the ruling circles; and for both movements victory came through social dislocation, a withdrawal of support from those agencies that deprived them of their just rights. In Montgomery, the Negro population stayed off the buses until the bus companies realized that the cost of protested segregation was greater than the cost of integration. With the businessman's sense of profit, the buses abandoned the color barrier. In like manner does the laborer withdraw himself from the production lines by conducting sit-down strikes, picket lines and boycotts. For both, the principle of victory has been this: shift the cost of inequality and injustice from the backs of the exploited and oppressed to the backs of the exploiters and oppressors!

When we speak of the "Negro" and the "laborer", of course, we are not speaking of two separate entities, but of one. The overwhelming mass of Negroes are laborers, working with their hands for other men. In withdrawing their bodies from buses, their hands from the machine, they are using the only weapons they have. They cannot manipulate others through their wealth or control of newspapers, radio and television. And just as the labor movement first developed this weapon, so we now find the Negro giving it new forms of expression.

The Negro and Labor

At this point, we should go somewhat more deeply into the relationship between the Negroes fight for freedom and the labor movement. Indeed, an understanding of the gains already made by the Negro is really impossible without an understanding of this relationship. Furthermore, as this pamphlet hopes to demonstrate, a close alliance of these movements holds a fundamental key to the next stage of the advancement of racial equality in the United States.

Though the leadership in the fight for democracy in the South has, for the time, passed out of the hands of the labor movement, it was in fact the rise of mass unionism that paved the way for the big advance of the Negro struggle. The entry of the United States into the Second World War and the consequent spurt in war production absorbed the surplus labor born of the depression and created a new need for manpower. This need, which was sharpened by the low ebb of immigration (which had come under the severe regulations of the quota system) provided a great opening for the Negro in the industrial complex. It meant, moreover, the influx of the Negro on a large scale, into the labor movement, specifically the CIO, which had organized the bulk of industrial production. The result was an economic elevation of the Negro, as he began to share in the job security and higher living standards won by the trade union movement.* The elevation of the Negro in this period was not confined to the economic sphere, but was cultural and political as well. For the more the Negro becomes integrated into the labor movement, the more he resists and struggles against segregation outside.

This increased economic status of the Negro, combined with the need for an anti-Fascist face (this means a subdual of domestic racism) was reflected in various Supreme Court decisions on voting, travel, education, etc. which tended to bring about a certain elevation of the cultural level of the Negro.

It was, we recall, also in this period that the leading Negro trade unionist, A. Philip Randolph, led the March on Washington Movement, forcing Roosevelt to issue the FEPC order. At the close of the war however--with a mitigation of the need for a democratic public face--Congress refused to appropriate funds to keep the Federal FEPC in operation. As the National Labor Service Fact Sheet on Equality of Opportunity points out, "Minority workers in those states and cities without local FEP

* Although it was the war that was responsible for the creation of the labor market, it was the pressing labor movement--to which the war production machine had to make some concessions for the preservation of national unity--that established the wage-levels from which the Negro benefited. If the employers had felt they could get away with it, there's no question that they would have maintained the same program of economic discrimination against Negroes that had been constructed in other sectors of the economy.

laws lost the gains that were made during World War II, and discriminatory practices were revived in many parts of the country . . . Although Federal FEP bills have been introduced repeatedly in both houses of Congress for the past 13 years, an informal coalition of Southern Democrats (the same!) and conservative Republicans continues to block passage. Meanwhile, Negroes and other non-white minorities continue to be paid far less than white workers, and their lower wages drag down the living standard for all."

Unfortunately, after the burst of militant activity in the late thirties and early forties--activity which saw Negroes pouring into the unions, making a deep dent in the prejudices of millions, as Negroes and whites joined in united class action, with the CIO demanding equal rights for Negroes and condemning the poll tax--after this burst the labor movement bogged down. The don't-rock-the-boat philosophy prevalent during the war (and, interestingly, encouraged by the Communist Party) helped to conservatize the labor movement and to bring it into closer cooperation with the government. This and the tougher competition now coming from the AFL, as millions came off the farms into the factories for the first time, tended to distract unionism from its important tasks with regard to the Negro.

Today, the united AFL-CIO appears preoccupied with its own internal problems. Pointing to racketeering in some unions, the enemies of labor have succeeded in discrediting the entire movement in the eyes of many. Thus, on the defensive now, labor seems to have forgotten the pledge it made upon unity to undertake a widescale organization of the South. At this writing, "Operation Dixie" has been discontinued with no appreciable success recorded.

Another example of the job labor has left undone came out of the 1959 AFL-CIO national convention. When A. Philip Randolph presented a resolution calling for the expulsion of two railway unions unless they removed "white only" clauses from their constitutions by a specified date, President George Meany burst out: "Who the hell appointed you guardian of all the Negroes in America?" This shameful and scurrilous attack by the man who claims to speak for American labor upon the man who does not claim, but indeed does speak for more Negroes than probably anyone else, is, unfortunately, a barometer of the unclarity that still exists in some parts of the labor movement on the race question. And though we are anxious to emphasize that the same attitudes do not prevail in the more progressive wing of the labor movement, we also recognize the appalling fact that none of the leaders of this wing, including Walter Reuther, were heard in defense of Randolph.

Because of incidents like the above, some Negroes have come to feel that the alliance between the Negro and labor movement, previously so effective, is finished; that labor has no fundamental concern for the Negro, and that, indeed, it represents simply another barrier to his advance toward equality.

This point of view is tragically mistaken. The labor movement must ally itself with the Negro, not out of any inherent morality or tolerance, but because of its very social nature. The non-unionized Negro is a potential scab, an agent of wage depression. Moreover, the cheap labor which he and other minority groups are forced to provide tends to drag down the wages of other workers. Therefore, out of labor's own interest it must open its ranks to Negroes, indeed, strive for their inclusion and become their primary allies in the civil rights movement.

This means union integration. Today's Negro cannot be organized extensively on a segregated, discriminatory basis. It is true, of course, that there are segregated and discriminatory unions, as the report of Herb Hill charged. It is also true, as we discussed earlier, that segregation is still very much a factor in the Southern working class psychology. Nevertheless, the labor movement may still claim a considerably better record on this score than any other organized force in society. Segregation as an institution within labor must of necessity be a transient phenomenon.

On virtually every issue, the civil rights and labor movements find themselves on the same end of the firing line and both are continually betrayed by the Democratic and Republican parties. Out of the same liberal Congress that labor and many Northern Negroes were in large measure responsible for putting on Capitol Hill have come: 1) anti-labor legislation and 2) no civil rights legislation of substance.

Like Negroes, labor organizers are also intimidated in the South. Unionists are beaten by thugs or jailed by the police in the South as a matter of routine. Like the Negro's struggle in Dixie, the labor movement's fight is marked by heroism and frustration.

In 1953, Louisiana sugar cane plantation workers struck during the harvest season. In October, after they had been on strike for 60 days, a state court issued a sweeping injunction at the behest of plantation owners that made just about all strike activity illegal. Two years later, the union's appeal reached the U.S. Supreme Court and . . . the state court was reversed, the injunction set aside. Regretably, in that two years, the strike had been broken and the local union wiped out. The legal victory was of some interest but hardly overimportant to the plantation workers who were driven out of the area or to those who remain at a wage of 41½ cents an hour, the legal minimum set by the Secretary of Agriculture.

For Independent Political Action

Just as formerly labor paved the way for a big advance for the Negro, today it is the Negro who paves the way for labor.

If some of the stuff of social idealism seems to have passed out of the labor movement, it is the essence of the Negro movement. The Negro and his children have marched to Washington in the tens of thousands. They have marched to state capitals, have circulated mass petition campaigns and have held gigantic protest rallies, etc. Not only have these activities had a mass base, but they are also politically independent. They are organized outside of the political machines of both parties, thereby underlining the unsuitability of both parties as organs representative of the Negro people.

The Washington demonstrations were not non-political. They were non-partisan: non-partisan, in part, to avoid engagement in petty politics; non-partisan, more importantly, because association with either the Democratic or Republican Parties sows the illusion that one of these parties is really capable of taking up the political cudgel for the Negro people. As these parties are now structured, who could take responsibility for such an association?

Unfortunately, there is an unhappy answer to this rhetorical question: The labor movement. It still believes it can effectively pursue its interests within the framework of the Democratic Party, despite the constant flow of betrayals. The passage of the outrageous Landrum-Griffin bill by a Congress controlled by the Democratic Party has opened the eyes of many trade unionists to the futility of placing its political life in the hands of that Party. Some have abandoned this illusion only to acquire another: that the correct course consists in supporting "liberal" Republicans as well as "liberal" Democrats, disregarding political affiliation.

Sections of the Negro leadership are also tied to the Democratic Party, especially in the NAACP, locals of which have attached themselves to the Party machines, which are anti-democratic in structure and corrupt in content. Among Negro leaders also, the abandonment of the one illusion has been followed by the acquisition of a new one with regard to the Republican "liberals."

Support of liberal Republicans is, to an extent, a progressive step in that it weakens all-out commitment to the Democratic Party. But this policy too, presents serious problems in view of the control exercised over the Republican Party by the Big Business cliques with stakes in the maintenance of the cheap labor market.

Moreover, all that such a policy can accomplish is a slight increment in the weight of liberal elements in Congress, elements still responsible, to one degree or another, to their respective national apparatuses, apparatuses still dominated by anti-democratic forces. The labor and Negro movements cannot be represented by such an amorphous body of liberals insufficiently committed to their ideals to organize under their banner and bound to their reactionary colleagues by that intricate network of obligations and log-rolling along which compromise and sellout roll. These movements must be represented by an organized, political party committed to them and responsible only to them.

For a Labor Party in the United States

It is not enough for the laborer, Negro and white, simply to withdraw support from the two major political parties. Political abstentionism has no place in 20th century American life. There are too many political forces in opposition.

If the Negro needs an organized, cohesive national instrument to serve as the vehicle for the realization of his aspirations, what character should this instrument have?

Preparatory to answering this question, let us recapitulate a number of points made earlier in the discussion:

We have seen that racial prejudice is nourished by segregation and that segregation is neither in the natural order of things nor divinely designed, but that it grew out of a series of developments in American society in the 19th and 20th centuries.

We have also seen that racial prejudice and segregation are not merely problems of intellect and education, but have functions in American society, functions serving the interests of minority ruling groups. In the South, segregation and disfranchisement are the bases of political rule; and for Big Business, the economic and political suppression of the Negro serves to maintain a cheap labor market from which huge profits are derived. From this it is not to be inferred that everyone having racial prejudice is either a Southern politician or corporation head. Such attitudes take on an independence and tradition of their own and must be combatted as such; at the same time the sources of Jim Crow must be attacked if the disease springing from them is to be destroyed.

Therefore, it is clear that the fight for civil rights cannot be limited to one or two spheres. A fight for the end of segregation in schools necessarily becomes involved with the fight for democracy (defense of the NAACP), and thus with the nature of political rule in the South--and this means with the whole Southern system. A further example: what happens in Southern cities when a Negro child who has experienced integrated education graduates? A return to the ghetto after a youthful fling with equality? It is obvious that such a situation could have profound effects on the child subjected to it. Real educational integration can become meaningful only with integration in all other areas of life, particularly housing and employment. In other words, the fight of the Negro cannot:

- 1) be confined to working through the courts, but must put pressure on all agencies of government;

- 2) be restricted to the achievement of equality only in education, or only in this or that area of life. His demand must be for full economic, political and social equality.

Finally, we have noted that despite all of its faults and short-sightedness, the labor movement has been the major white ally of the Negro in his struggle, and has, because of its very social nature, goals and interests parallel to those of the Negro. Indeed, though the wedge of racial prejudice may unfortunately come between the Negro and white laborer their common welfare transcends the color line, which has been dimming with the growth of unionism. In addition, because their interests are parallel, the Negro and labor movements have both been attacked and frustrated by the same enemy: the coalition of conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats.

Getting back to the question we asked before this summary . . .

18 million people now belong to the union movement. There are, in addition, 18 million Negroes in the United States. Add to this the millions of farmers whose homes and land are held in mortgage by the big banks; the hundreds of thousands of exploited migrant farm workers; and the many millions more who are not yet part of the labor movement, but whose interests are at one with it. Here we have the makings of a labor party in the United States.

Will this be a "class" party, advancing the interests of a certain section of the American people? It will be this, but the class embraced by this party will be the natural majority of the American people; indeed, this party will be the next great democratic party in the United States.

Are we proposing a "third party," a splinter group, which history tells us has not amounted to much in the last hundred years in American politics? Would this be a step toward the kind of thing we can see in some European countries, where dozens of small parties create instability and crisis?

We do not propose a third party, but a real second party. We see no fundamental differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties. Each has its liberal wing, each has its conservative wing. To the voter the labels "Democrat" and "Republican" no longer have meaning. Does the designation "Democrat" under the name of one candidate enable us to differentiate him politically from another designated "Republican?" There is, in reality, only one political party in the United States. There are more than one or two political philosophies in the Democratic-Republican Party, but they don't have their own organization. They cannot put forth their point of view coherently, so that their election or rejection marks the ascendancy or descendancy of this or that point of view. That is why politics has become a farce in the United States.

Well, if politics is a farce in this country and both political parties are the same, where do we go from here? Assuming it's a good idea, this labor party business seems to move farther away, with every word about today's realities.

Here we should stop for a moment and qualify the previous paragraph. The parties are not exactly the same. It is true that in terms of their ability to deliver--to follow through on their promises and to represent the popular will-- the parties are equally unproductive. But, as earlier discussion showed, there is one vital respect in which they differ. One party is a majority party, enjoying the support, in the main, of precisely those forces mentioned above--the labor movement, Negroes (where they can vote), small farmers, etc. This of course is the Democratic Party. The Republican Party remains a minority party--despite Eisenhower's personal appeal--and it is generally recognized as the representative of Big Business. It, too, has its "liberals," but the bulk of organized liberalism is to be found within the Democratic Party. There it may be paralyzed, but there it is.

Because most of the people we envision in a labor party are now supporting the Democrats, we have to give special attention to the Democratic Party, and especially to the tensions between its liberal and reactionary wings. These tensions are the dynamic potential for a political realignment. Nobody at this stage of the game would want to predict the outcome of the liberal-reactionary struggle. Some expect the Dixiecrats to be forced out, leaving the party machinery in the hands of the liberals. Others may expect the labor movement to pull out and set up its own political apparatus, calling upon Negroes and white liberals for support. Whatever the process of realignment, one thing is clear: every conceivable pressure must be brought to bear to sharpen the internal conflict. Liberals must be forcefully made to understand that no compromises will be endured, that the fight for full civil rights now must be pushed to the heart of the Democratic Party, and that this fight may no longer be subordinated to considerations of Party unity. We know from experience that the choice must be made between the Negro's rights and Party unity. We believe the two are mutually incompatible. The liberal disagrees. But he has not made the test--he must be called upon to do so now.

The Negro is a catalyst in American politics precisely because, directly or indirectly, he challenges the liberal. If others have not been educated to the role of the Southern Democracy in blocking federal aid to education, expanded old-age pensions, increased minimum wage laws, and improved social security benefits--if others do not know what the power of Eastland means in their own lives, the Negro needs no educating. He knows Eastland well enough and is not quite sure what Humphrey is doing in the same party with him. Is this because the Negro is a purist, or a political moralist? No more so than anyone else. It's just that political morality is right now an absolute concrete necessity for the Negro. For him, political immorality is measurable in poverty, humiliation, self-degradation and blood!

Granting the desirability and possibility of a political realignment, what could we expect from a labor party?

We could expect from a labor party much that we cannot realistically hope for from either of the present parties.

A labor party would run candidates committed to the fight of the Negro for equality, of the trade union for improved living conditions, of the farmer for the fair share of his produce. They would be committed to these forces not because of altruistic or idealistic motives simply, but because they depend upon their support in the way candidates now depend on the support of the machines.

A labor party could undertake a mobilization of the Southern Negro in a fight for the ballot that would mean nothing less than a political revolution in the South. The Democratic Party cannot do this, however noble the intentions of some of its more liberal components, since this would mean the destruction of that Party's machinery in the South. The Republican Party cannot do this because it would be a step toward unionization of the Southern Negro, accompanied by a rise in his wages. A labor party can and must do this because, second to the Negro, it stands most to gain from the destruction of the Southern political machine and because it cannot guarantee the wages and job security of its own members so long as the Negro is outside of the trade union movement. And the unionization of the South cannot be accomplished in the context of Jim Crow dominance, of the poll tax, of lynching. It cannot be done by support of the present forces which represent the South politically. It cannot be done in conjunction with the extremely reactionary attitudes of Northern heavy industry, power companies and insurance companies which function in the South like colonial administrators.

A labor party would confront the voter with real choices. It would not have to take responsibility for an Eastland or Faubus or Johnson--or a Landrum or Griffin. In those areas where trade unionists play dominant roles in the Democratic Party, the local Parties have fought vigorously against discrimination and segregation, in schools, housing, employment, etc.

Could a labor party win? We believe a labor party could not only win, but would consistently be the majority party in the United States. It would include many of the liberal elements that have already made their presence felt in national politics, and would bring into existence an entirely new configuration of Southern

politics. The franchisement of the 6,000,000 potential Negro voters in the South would transform minority rule into majority rule.

The formation of a labor party, in and of itself, does not guarantee the Negro an abrupt end to his suffering and humiliation. Nor does it mean a complete overnight realization of all democratic ideals. The scars left on society by a decaying order, in the form of ugly traditions, bigoted, narrow thought patterns and prejudiced behavior, run deep. No one knows better than the Negro the disillusionment that trails the belief that any single development automatically leads to total liberation from the thousands of great and minute affronts he daily endures. To encourage him in this belief is dishonest and he knows it from experience. Further, as socialists, we are committed not only to the formation of a labor party, but to deeper transformations in the economic, political and social life of America.

Nonetheless, if the formation of a labor party does not in and of itself guarantee the realization of our democratic ideals, of total Negro freedom, it is a gigantic step in the right direction. It will be the most promising beginning made in decades, for from the start it will represent a frontal attack on the social institutions upon which race hate feeds--and this is the job to be done now! This is the job the two major parties have not tackled and will not. It represents the extension of the Negroes' fight into all spheres--economic, political and social--on a national, organized scale.

The new party will have problems. They are not to be made light of. It will be beset by internal as well as external difficulties. It will be attacked by reactionaries outside and will be plagued by some corrupt and opportunist elements on the inside. Like the trade union movement today, unable because of its wide democratic base to conceal corruption very long (unlike management which, having to account to no one but itself, can keep a lid on its own corruption), a labor party will be vulnerable to smears. But it will be a far healthier party than the two now existing. It will be an infinitely more democratic party, based not on machines and bosses, but on the great mass of working men and women, Negro and white.

Today the Negro is in the forefront of this struggle for new politics in America. He is even now preparing his challenge to the Democratic and Republican parties. He is already tugging at the sleeve of the labor movement. His white brothers are sluggish and reluctant. They are unsure: perhaps next time. But the Negro is impatient. He has had enough and wants to move. And in this is his contribution to democracy.

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